



Werribee Wag-Tales • Volume 18 No 1, 2012

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The You-Yangs towards the end of Winter.

The day always starts well, Gwen quickly locating the two Tawny Frogmouths, as they were sitting in the sun cameras were soon clicking. The short walk into the bush near the Information Centre found another gem...Painted Button Quail, no photos, they move too fast! On around the Great Circle Drive, what a difference the winter rain has had on the parched bush land. Out into the Seed-garden area and the bird Count was rising by the minute. Cameras out again, the Red-capped-Robin was most obliging. Mike has provided some excellent photos.

Dave did a preliminary Count before most of the group moved onto Serenedip. As we were travelling home there were two Brolga in a paddock, again Mike's camera will tell the story.

We are so lucky to have some many amazing bird habitats so close to Werribee, why would you want to live anywhere else



Cape Barren Goose
Black Swan
Australian Shelduck
Australian Wood Duck
Grey Teal
Chestnut Teal
Pacific Black Duck
Hardhead
Australasian Grebe
Crested pigeon
Tawny Frogmouth
Little Pied Cormorant
White Necked Heron
Eastern Great Egret

Royal spoonbill
Straw-necked Ibis
Black -shouldered kite
Whistling kite
Black Kite
Wedge-tailed Eagle
Little Eagle
Purple Swamphen
Dusky Moorhen
Masked Lapwing
Painted Button-quail
Galah
Little Corella
Purple-crowned Lorikeet

Eastern rosella
Kookaburra
Brown Treecreeper
Superb Fairywren
Weebill
Yellow-rumped thornbill
Striated Pardalote
White plumed honeyeater
Red Wattle bird
New Holland Honeyeater
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Grey Shrike Thrush
Australian Magpie
Grey fantail

Willie Wagtail
Eastern rosella
Kookaburra
Little Raven
Magpie-lark
White-winged Chough
Scarlet Robin
Red-capped Robin
Eastern yellow robin
Silvereye
Welcome Swallow
Tree martin
Common Blackbird
Common Starling
House Sparrow
Tree Sparrow



A Story from Broken Hill.....

I have been working as a nurse for the Royal Flying Doctor Service RFDS in Broken Hill for 3 months and I was very pleased to welcome Dave Torr and Iain Denham for a few days of bird watching.

To begin: - a few facts about Broken Hill. The area was first explored by Charles Sturt in 1840 when looking for the *inland sea*. In 1883 Charles Rasp from Mt Gipps station discovered the Broken Hill Line of Lode which was to be known as the world's largest deposit of silver, lead and zinc. Charles formed the syndicate of 7 which in 1885 became BHP Billiton - Broken Hill Proprietary Ltd.

In 1891 Sir Sydney Kidman acquired 1/14th share in the new Broken Hill mine in exchange for 4 steers. Anthony Kelly bought the share from him for 150 pounds and 10 years later it was worth 1.5 million pounds. Ironically the *Broken Hill* which gives Broken Hill its name has been mined away.

The Broken Hill Gaol was opened in 1892 and is the longest functioning gaol in Australia, except for during World War 11 when the military forces stored Australia's gold bullion in the cells.

The singer June Bronhill (Gough) surname is taken from an abbreviation of the name Broken Hill.

One day at the RFDS base I was showing a man around the hangar who said he was a Vet was Queanbeyan. I asked if he had heard of a Vet called Doug Blood and he replied "Of course! I still use all his textbooks". And finally - just in case you intend to visit - the streets are 2 lanes wide but everyone drives down the middle.

Dave and Iain arrived after a 10 hours drive straight from Melbourne. At bedtime on the first night I asked if anyone "fancied a hottie". Dave's eyebrow's shot to the ceiling. I'm not sure what he was thinking. I was suggesting a hot water bottle.

The first day we drove 120kms to the Lakes at Menindee, including visits to Sunset strip (not as exotic as the name suggests!), Copi Hollow, Pamamaroo Lake, Darling River main weir and Kinchega wool shed. In Menindee we met Geoffrey Looney who very kindly drove us around in his car. We saw 70 species. New favourites for me were the white winged fairy wren, chirruping wedgebill and black honey eater.

Our plans began to implode when Dave's car needed a replacement alternator. Not a part readily available in the outback. Dave and Iain are booked on a flight to South America in a few days, and I have only 2 more days with the RFDS and will need to vacate the house.

Except for rocket travel and hitchhiking every possible mode and combination of transport back to Melbourne is considered.



In the meantime I drive the RFDS cross-country retrieval 4 wheel drive diesel monster. The gear-stick still remains a complete mystery to me. Dave and Iain drive around Broken Hill in my car and there are several sightings. I receive a call at work from the RFDS cleaner Allen to tell me "Townies are driving your car down Argent Street". *Townies* are anyone not born in Broken Hill. Another sighting was phoned through by the RFDS primary nurse Jacqueline of "I just saw a grey haired distinguished man walking into your house". Both Dave and Iain made claim to this description. I don't know which one was sighted.

Dave's car was eventually fixed. While we were waiting at Nissan the lady said "it won't be much longer - they are just putting the tyre back on". I sit there thinking "it's not the tyre that needed replacing - it was the alternator" - but all was well and they were off back to Melbourne.

The house was empty and lonely when they left and I missed having them around. There were lots of laughs, and one remark I can't forget was when talking about sunscreen lotion and my daily use of Nivea cream. I commented on whether it was worth the effort when Dave wistfully observed 'But have you considered what you might look like without it?'. It was great to have two such erudite and entertaining visitors. Who else would spend 4 hours finding you a Rufous Fieldwren? And how does the Cuckoo chick learn its native call when reared by strangers?

As I was still in Broken Hill I had time to see Pat and Geoff Forrest as they travelled through to Perth on the Indian Pacific. The train was scheduled to arrive at 0620 hours and leave at 0840 hours. The station master was adamant - even if the train was late the departure time would still be 0820 hours. Maybe he had read Stephen Hawking's theoretical physics of bending space and time. In fact the train arrived at 1020 hours and left at 1055 hours. Pat and Geoff both looked well and were enjoying the trip.

On the way home during a visit to the Bendigo Cathedral I learn that Ozanam house in Flemington road Melbourne is named after *Frederic Ozanam* 1813-1853 - who was the founder of St Vincent De Paul.

Thanks Liz for a great story...



SEPTEMBER OUTING TO WOODLAND PARKS

Our September outing began with the meeting of Werribee Wagtail members and guests at the Somerton Rd picnic area of Woodlands Historic Park in Greenvale. We were pleased to have relocated birders Jim and S... accompanying us.

We took the track along noisy Somerton Rd and birders immediately began commenting on the magnificent River Red Gums along the waterway which is the Moonee Ponds Creek. These trees were occupied by Galahs, Australian Magpies, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Ravens, Red-rumped Parrots, and Eastern and Crimson Rosellas.

Yellow-rumped Thornbills, White-plumed Thornbills, Striated Pardalote and Grey Fantails were flitting in the lighter foliage. The group were able to get good views of a female Pink Robin. Her colouring was olive brown above, with cinnamon underparts with a pinkish tint. Pink Robin's numbers are secure in Victoria where it is determined *uncommon*.

After morning tea as we crossed the creek a Weebill was heard. We wandered up Woodlands Hill with views over the city. Sharing a dead shrub amongst the eucalypts was a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and a Pallid Cuckoo. The Pallid Cuckoo has unique colouration, with grey plumage, darker on the wings and back with a broadly barred black and white undertail. A flock of Eastern Rosellas were seen and Red Wattle birds were common.

Continuing back to the carpark we were stopped by loud chattering of Yellow-rumped Thornbills. We searched the treetops for a predator. Perhaps there was a snake in the grass. Further into the native woodland Dave played the Weebill Sonata on his hand machine. The bird answered. Dave said that the Weebill is Australia's smallest bird. Its small bill is suited to catching small scale insects.

During lunch Nancy showed us the bird brooch she received from Birdlife on the occasion of her 93 birthday. Congratulations Nancy.

After lunch the birdwatchers relocated to Brimbank Park along the Maribyrnong River. On arrival Iain identified a Peregrine Falcon. On our river walk some birds observed were Superb Fairy Wren, Yellow Thornbill, Willy Wagtails, Australian Wood Duck, a Darter and Long-billed Corella. Then Gini who had visited the site some years previously spotted what she had been looking for, a pair of well camouflaged Tawny Frogmouths. That brought an end to a good day of birdwatching in dry forest woodland in close proximity to our big city. ...species were observed. Thanks to Iain for organising the outing.

Tawny Frogmouth	White plumed honeyeater
Australasian Darter	Red Wattle bird
Straw-necked Ibis	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Grey Shrike Thrush
Silver Gull	Australian Magpie
Galah	Pied Currawong
Long-billed Corella	Grey fantail
Sulphur-crested cockatoo	Willie Wagtail
Rainbow lorikeet	Little Raven
Crimson Rosella	Magpie-lark
Eastern rosella	Scarlet Robin
Red-rumped parrot	Rose Robin
Pallid Cuckoo	Welcome Swallow
Superb Fairywren	Tree martin
Weebill	Common Blackbird
Yellow Thornbill	Common Starling
Yellow-rumped thornbill	Common Myna
Spotted Pardalote	Red-browed Finch
Striated Pardalote	Diamond Firetail
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	

